

## **APPENDIX C. AGENCY RESPONSE LETTERS**



October 11, 2002

Linda Grafil  
Project Environmental Planner  
Logan Simpson Design, Inc.  
51 West Third Street, Suite 450  
Tempe, Arizona 85281

RE: CITY OF GLENDALE REVIEW COMMENTS ON SOUND BARRIERS/WALLS  
RECOMMENDED IN THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR  
MARYLAND AVENUE OVERPASS AT 55<sup>th</sup> AVENUE/GRAND AVENUE (US 60)  
(TRACS NO. 060 MA 153 H5610 01C)

Dear Ms. Grafil:

The City of Glendale has reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment prepared for the above project transmitted to the City by cover letter on August 26, 2002 for our review and comment. With one significant exception, the City of Glendale has no objections to the findings and recommendations of the Draft Environmental Assessment for this project.

The Noise Analysis section of the Draft Environmental Assessment (pages 44 –49) contains recommendations for the construction of three (3) sound barriers/walls (B-1, B-2 and B-3) along Maryland Avenue, east of 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue to mitigate the potential noise impacts associated with this proposed project. Although the City has no objections with the general findings of the Noise Analysis and concurs with the need for the construction of two of the three recommended sound barriers, we do not concur with the recommendations contained within the Assessment relative to the specific location/extents and/or construction height for walls B-2 and B-3, and we do not support the construction of wall B-1 in its entirety. The following summarizes the City's comments and recommendations for the design and construction of the three sound walls identified in the Draft Environmental Assessment:

**Sound Barrier B-1:** The property at the northeast corner of 53<sup>rd</sup> Drive and Maryland Avenue is owned by the City of Glendale and is occupied by a City multiple residence housing complex (Cholla Apartments). Those portions of this complex adjoining Maryland Avenue and 53<sup>rd</sup> Drive are either open parking areas or landscaped frontage areas for the housing complex. The construction of an 8' high wall along the multiple residence complex as recommended in the Draft EA would not be appropriate given the design arrangement of this housing complex. As the property owner, the City's requests that no noise wall be included in the project at this location.

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Sound Barriers/Walls – Maryland Avenue Overpass at 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Grand Avenue (US60)  
(TRACS NO. 060 MA 153 H5610 01C)

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Sound Barrier B-2: The occupied residential lot at the northwest corner of 53<sup>rd</sup> Drive and Maryland Avenue currently has a 5' - 6' high chain link fence along its south and rear property lines bordering Maryland Avenue and the alley. The Draft EA recommends the construction of an 11' high sound wall along the entire south property line of this lot bordering Maryland Avenue. The construction of an 11' high wall at that location would be out of character for this area and would create a very negative and visually imposing element for the street and the area, particularly given the wall's very close proximity to Maryland Avenue and the adjoining sidewalk. Furthermore, the recommended location and height of that sound wall is not allowed by the City's Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance limits the height of any wall adjoining arterial or collector streets to a maximum of 8', and further limits the height to a maximum of 3' for any portion of the wall within the front yard area of the residence (the area from the front line of the residence to the street – 53<sup>rd</sup> Drive). In lieu of the recommended noise wall in the Draft EA, the City recommends the design and construction of an 8' decorative wall along the south side of the occupied residential lot (wing wall from front corner of the house to Maryland, and then along Maryland to rear property line). In addition, we recommend the continuation of this 8' wall along the rear property line adjoining the alley (see comments on Wall B-3 and the attached sketch). We believe that these recommended walls, consistent with the City's Zoning Ordinance, will provide more than adequate noise buffering and mitigation for this residential lot from Maryland Avenue traffic, particularly given the fact that this occupied lot currently has only an open chain link fencing surrounding the property.

Sound Barrier B-3: The lot at the immediate northeast corner of 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Maryland Avenue is currently vacant, and is to be acquired by ADOT for project improvements (additional street improvement and an open landscaped drainage channel). The occupied residential lot north of the vacant lot has an existing 6' wall along its south property line from its rear property corner to the approximate midpoint of the residence. The Draft EA recommends the construction of an 8' high wall along the south and west property lines of the vacant lot. The 95% plans for the project prepared by Baker Engineering locate the sound wall approximately 5' south of and paralleling the north property line of the vacant lot and then along the rear property line of that lot. The presumed reason for this departure from the Draft EA recommendations is the need for the construction of the open drainage channel through the vacant lot. The City does not support the location for this sound wall as identified in the Draft EA, nor does it support the wall location identified in the 95% plans for the project. An 8' wall located immediately behind the sidewalk along Maryland Avenue as recommended by the Draft EA does not provide a sufficient opportunity to install necessary mitigation landscaping along the Maryland

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Avenue side of the wall, and it creates a potential security issue within the open drainage channel area that would be hidden from street view. The placement of the sound wall 5' south of and paralleling the north property line as identified in the 95% plans creates an unacceptable 5' nuisance area between the existing 6' wall on the property to the north and this proposed 8' wall. The City recommends that this decorative 8' sound wall be located within the landscaped island between the planned 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue cul-de-sac and new 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue as generally shown on the 95% plans. This wall should then extend east on the north side of the drainage channel and terminate at the end of the existing 6' wall on the north property. If needed, the existing 6' wall could be reconstructed to an 8' height at its current location. The 8' wall identified on the 95% plans extending along the rear of the vacant lot should be constructed along the rear of the lot east of the alley as that lot is the primary receiver for the noise mitigation in that area (see comments on Wall B-2 above). Attached is a sketch identifying the recommend location and design for this wall. We believe that the sound walls at these locations will provide the needed buffering for the existing residences at this location from the new signalized street intersection at 54<sup>th</sup>/Maryland and the Maryland Avenue traffic associated with the project.

If you need any further information or any clarification regarding the foregoing, please contact me at (623) 930-3635.

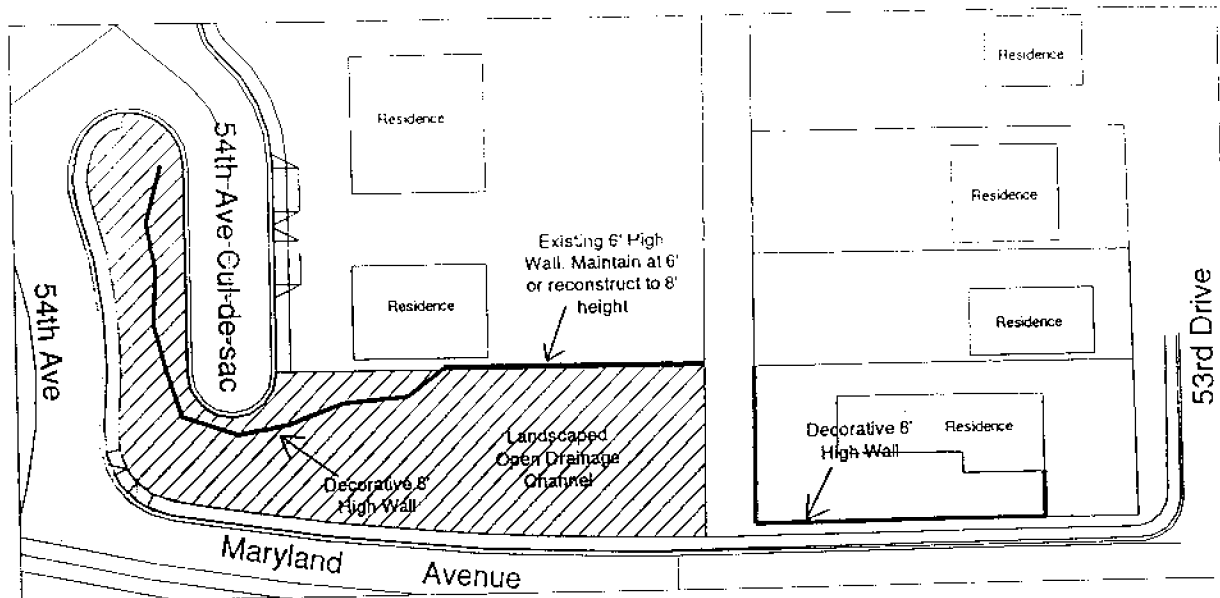
Sincerely,



Bob Coons  
Special Projects Administrator  
City of Glendale  
Engineering Department

cc: Trent Kelso, P.E., Valley Project Management, Arizona Department of Transportation  
Anthony Pisano, Michael Baker Jr. Inc.

Attachment:



## ATTACHMENT

### CITY OF GLENDALE RECOMMENDED SOUND BARRIERS/WALLS: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR MARYLAND AVENUE OVERPASS

AT 55<sup>th</sup> AVENUE/GRAND AVENUE (US 60)  
(TRACS NO. 060 MA 153 H5610 01C)

**Insert City of Glendale Response Letter Here**

# PHONE CONVERSATION

Michael Shirley/Logan Simpson Design

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**Date:** 09-05-02

**Time:** 1:26

**With:** Jim Threadgill, Glendale Union High School District

**Project:** Grand Avenue at 55<sup>th</sup>, 67<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup>.

**Project #:** 00-5179

**Phone:** 623.435.6689

**Conversation:** Mr. Threadgill called inquiring about construction sequencing on the upcoming Grand Avenue Projects. He requested information on when the 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue project would begin. His concern was that if the 43<sup>rd</sup>, 51<sup>st</sup>, 55<sup>th</sup>, 67<sup>th</sup>, and 75<sup>th</sup> Avenue projects overlap, that this overlap would greatly impact school buses. He also stated that it would impact not only the Glendale Union High School District, but would impact all school districts in the west valley.

I contacted Michael Phillips (ADOT West Valley Field Office) and Carlos Lara (ADOT Deer Valley Field Office) to confirm the current construction status of 43<sup>rd</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup>. Carlos indicated that due to a utility issue that 43<sup>rd</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> were behind schedule and construction would not begin until January 2003. This would mean that construction would overlap at all five intersections.

I then called Mr. Threadgill back to pass along this information. I also gave him Mark Bonan's (ADOT Phoenix District Construction) phone number if he had further construction-related questions. He ended the conversation by stating that he was in favor of the projects and felt that they would definitely help the traffic operations in the west valley, but that during construction it was going to be a mess.



# Maricopa County

Environmental Services Department

Albert F. Brown, Director  
11 North Central, Ste 595  
Phoenix, Arizona 85004-1950  
Phone: (602) 506-6623  
Fax: (602) 506-5141  
TDD: (602) 506-6704

August 29, 2002

Mr. Michael Shirley  
Senior Environmental Planner  
Logan Simpson Design Inc.  
51 West Third Street, #450  
Tempe, AZ 85281

Dear Mr. Shirley:

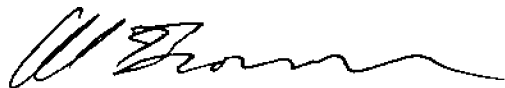
This is in response to your letter of August 26, 2002 regarding environmental assessments for the Maryland Avenue Overpass at 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Grand; 67<sup>th</sup> Avenue Overpass at Northern Avenue/Grand; and Olive Avenue Overpass at 75<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Grand Avenues.

To ensure you have the earthmoving permits required by the Department, please contact Larry Spivack at 602-506-6739.

In addition, contact the Cities of Phoenix, Glendale and Peoria's water and wastewater departments regarding abandonment and reconstruction of water and sewer lines. If any affected land is within unincorporated areas, please contact the MCESD Water & Wastewater Division at 506-6666.

I wish you great success with these projects.

Sincerely,



Al Brown  
Director



October 3, 2002

Michael Shirley  
Project Environmental Planner  
Logan Simpson Design, Inc.  
51 West Third Street, Suite 450  
Tempe, AZ 85281

**RE: Maryland Avenue Overpass at 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Grand Avenue  
Project No. STP-060-B(007)**

Dear Mr. Shirley:

This is in response to your letter of August 26<sup>th</sup>, which sought comments on three draft environmental assessments for grade separation projects on Grand Avenue. I have reviewed the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the above referenced project and have the following comments:

While the the project as designed will not significantly impact Valley Metro transit operations within this corridors, it does provide an opportunity to address passenger facility needs of current transit riders, especially for riders with physical disabilities. As was noted Jim Dickey's letter to you on March 1, 2001, "Removal of architectural barriers for the patron is a major factor in accommodating the disabled in our transit systems".

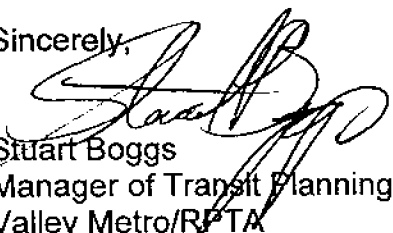
At present one transit route, the Yellow Line, operates in the project area. The Yellow Line functions as a local route along Grand Avenue between Peoria Avenue in Peoria and downtown Phoenix. Both bus stops in the project area are unimproved and do not meet ADA requirements. The Preferred Alternative identified in the EA would carry Maryland Avenue over Grand Avenue on an elevated structure. The avenue would also be moved approximately 200 feet north of the current intersection, requiring land acquisitions to accommodate the approach hills for the new bridge. The current connection between Maryland Avenue and Grand Avenue would be closed, as would the connection to 55<sup>th</sup> avenue south of Grand Avenue. These alterations would provide the opportunity to develop a new northbound and a new southbound bus stop on Grand Avenue that would be enhanced to meet ADA requirements.

The northbound stop and associated bus pullout could be developed under the overpass west of the 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue off ramp. The southbound stop and associated bus pullout could be developed on land made available by the closure of the Maryland and 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue connections to Grand Avenue. This relocated and improved stop would also address railroad encroachment issues associated with the current Yellow Line stop.

In closing, I would also suggest that a pedestrian signal and crosswalk be installed on Grand Avenue in the project area. Since the elimination of the Maryland Avenue intersection will improve traffic flow, and by extension traffic speed, along Grand Avenue, it is imperative that safe pedestrian movement across Grand Avenue be provided. This is of critical importance since the elevated section of Maryland Avenue as designed will not include sidewalks.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on this project. We look forward to working with you to address these issues. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our comments please do not hesitate to contact me at (602) 534-5474.

Sincerely,



Stuart Boggs  
Manager of Transit Planning  
Valley Metro/RPTA

cc: Jim Dickey, Deputy Executive Director, Operations & Planning, Valley Metro/RPTA

# DRAFT

October 30, 2002

Mr. Stuart Boggs  
Transit Planning Manager  
Valley Metro/RPTA  
302 North First Avenue, Suite 700  
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

**Re: Grand Avenue (US60) at Maryland/55<sup>th</sup> Avenues  
Transit Facilities  
NH-060-B(007)B  
060-MA-153 H5601 01C**

Dear Mr. Boggs,

This letter is in response to your October 3, 2002 letter related to the transit facilities at this site. You stated that while the project as designed will not significantly impact Valley Metro transit operation, it does provide an opportunity to address passenger facility needs of current transit riders. This statement is not totally consistent with the discussions during the September 17<sup>th</sup> coordination meeting with RPTA and City of Glendale transit staff. The two decisions from that meeting were to remove the existing bus stop location just south of Maryland Avenue along northwest bound (NWB) Grand and relocate the existing bus stop (sign and bench) just north of Maryland along NWB Grand to a point further north of the proposed improvements. The relocated bus stop was analyzed following the meeting to determine if enough right-of-way was available to construct a new bus bay and we determined that there was not sufficient right-of-way. Therefore, our current design reflects the removal of the existing bus stop just south of Maryland Avenue and relocation of the existing bus stop just north of Maryland Avenue only.

In your letter, you suggested that ADOT evaluate the inclusion of two new bus bays along Grand Avenue at this intersection. The first bus bay was to be located under the new overpass along NWB Grand. We have determined that adding a bus bay at this location is not feasible for two reasons. First, a standard bus bay with sidewalk does not fit between the new bridge piers and existing Grand Avenue, and second, buses parked within a bus bay would block the line of sight for southbound 55th Avenue drivers turning NWB onto Grand Avenue. The second bus bay was to be located within the relocated Maryland Avenue right-of-way along southeast bound (SEB) Grand. While this appears to be a feasible alternative, we would request funding for this enhancement from either RPTA or the City of Glendale Transit Department. Please advise ADOT by November 8, 2002 if you decide to fund this enhancement.

Your last suggestion was for ADOT to add a pedestrian signal and crosswalk to the upcoming project to allow safe pedestrian movement across Grand Avenue. We have provided for this movement with sidewalks on the Maryland Avenue overpass structure, however, access to the existing bus stop along SEB Grand would be very difficult. We have evaluated the addition of a pedestrian signal and crosswalk at this location and found the construction of one to be challenging. We have also evaluated the construction of a sidewalk from the west end of the overpass to the bus stop. However, pedestrians would need their own crossing of the RR tracks for this option. BNSF is expanding their yard in this area and has informed ADOT that they would allow pedestrian movements at this location. For these reasons, we request that RPTA evaluate the removal of this bus stop following the opening of the Maryland Avenue overpass due to the low ridership at this stop. We will continue to work with you in the near future to resolve this issue as part of the current design project.

Please note that the current ADOT design project is nearing completion and your prompt attention to this matter is requested. Please contact me at (602) 712-8167 if you have any additional questions.

DRAFT

Regards,

Trent Kelso, P.E.  
Project Manager

Cc: Jim Romero, ADOT  
Anthony Pisano, Baker  
Linda Grafil, LSD  
Bob Coons, City of Glendale

Attachments: None

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